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**Kate Racer, Associate Director
Division of Housing and Development
DHCD
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RE: Salmon Brook Commons Review Comments

You will most certainly notice the essence of the comments received relate to the primary concern regarding any potential development on this parcel which directly relates to the history of use on the site. The historic presence of an underground storage tank and the use of paints, thinners, petroleum products and other hazardous materials is a significant issue for the Board of Selectmen and other members of the community. Because this site is located directly upstream of the Dunstable public water supply wellhead, we are concerned that post-development conditions could result in the eventual contamination of the community public water supply.

Our concerns, specifically, are that the disposal of wastewater on the site and/or the recharge of storm water on site will add new pollutants to the groundwater that recharges the Salmon Brook. The proximity of the wellhead to the Salmon Brook suggests that surface water could be drawn directly to the wellhead along with any pollutants contained therein. Further, we are concerned that the increase in recharge on the site could mobilize hazardous waste that has been bound to subsurface soil particles. In this situation, these pollutants could more easily migrate to the Salmon Brook and eventually contaminate the public water supply.

A more informed assessment of the potential for drinking water contamination can be made when additional information is provided relative to three points: 1) The results of the recently performed 21e assessment for the site; 2) The proposed wastewater management approach; and 3) the proposed storm water management approach. Until such an assessment is performed, the Town would request that the developer employ wastewater and storm water management techniques that do not allow for infiltration on site. For wastewater, this approach would probably require the use of a tight tank.

For storm water, these techniques could include the use of lined bio-retention facilities that employ adequate surface pre-treatment of storm water before eventual discharge to the brook.

The Board of Selectmen circulated copies of your 10/26/04 request for comments along with the application to all boards. The following is a list of comments received:

Planning Board, Water Commission, Conservation Commission, Board of Road Commissioners and Affordable Housing Study Committee have noted the following corrections and/or comments necessary in the application:

GENERAL INFORMATION

Item #14 Wetlands on site. Application indicates none, where the property actually abuts Salmon Brook, referenced throughout document.

MUNICIPAL CONTACT INFORMATION

Item #1 Chief Elected Official: spelling of Vice Chairman of Selectmen needs to read "Susan Psaledakis".

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Item #3 Local Contributions: In the area where the contributions are being briefly explained, the statement should read that the Town will allow for 30 rental units where only one would normally be allowed; however we are concerned with the level of density and its impact on the town, feeling that 20 would be a more appropriate consideration.

AHSC¹ has also questioned reference regarding outreach re: qualification for 40B, requesting information on whom "the Town" refers to.

THE SITE

Item #1 Site Characteristics - Dunstable Water Commission confirms the Town's well is fed by Salmon Brook – this brook is upstream from our town well and we are extremely concerned about contamination.

Item #2 Current and prior use should read: 4 buildings currently on the site; other uses have included home heating oil distribution, lawn sprinkler company, mechanical auto repair related activities and one dwelling. Should also state what will be done with existing buildings – town boards understood that all existing buildings will be razed.

Item #5 Acreage – total acreage indicated as 3.5 acres, supporting documentation should be required – buildable acreage would be less 200' buffer from Salmon Brook.

Item #7 Land value verification document omitted.

¹ Affordable Housing Study Committee

Item #8 Available Utilities – Private Well should reference cistern for local fire protection and reserve tank to aid sprinkler system as discussed with the Water Commission. Note: our present water supply does not have enough distribution for this project without an upgrade to the system. Applicant agreed to provide improvements: 12" pipe, fire hydrants, 18 taps, must meet rules and regulations.

Board of Health's main concern is with regard to locating an on-site sanitary waste disposal system of the required capacity. They note that the site borders Salmon Brook, a waterway that intersects a variety of water sources in Dunstable and is also upstream of the town wells from which our town public water supply is provided. They indicated that the limited space of the lot, with less than 4 acres and 30 units would require close attention to provision of a design adequate to meeting the need to both treat the wastes and protect the water resources of Salmon Brook.

Item #9 Access to Public Transit - Remove comma after the word "no".

Item #10 21E Assessment - Add notation that there is a possibility of hazardous waste on site. Statement on application contradicts page 4 – item #1.

Item #12 Current zoning classification for site is R-1, usage allowed one unit per two acres.

Item #13 Municipality denied permit in October of 2003 for a dry cleaning business proposed to operate on the property.

Item #14 Waiver requests should be itemized to reflect the impact on the town – no specific list of waivers indicated. Under the comprehensive permit, the applicant would be requesting waivers of all local bylaws.

SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOOD & COMMUNITY

Item #1 Land use in surrounding neighborhood included R-1 residential, special permit for gas station and variety store business, mixed use district and post office.

Item #2 Should also include new zone for mixed use district, business.

Item #4 Affordable Housing in close proximity to site: Currently none, however newly approved mixed use district contains provisions for some affordable housing.

Item #5 Site was also formally used for auto body repairs and home heating oil distribution.

THE PROJECT

Item #4 Unit Mix – No indication whether any of the units will be handicapped accessible?

Item #6 Unusable Open Space: listed as -0- although percentage of open space hasn't been calculated, i.e. 200' buffer near Salmon Brook, set backs, septic, etc.

Item #9 Question accuracy – FY05 tax rate = \$12.76 per thousand.

Item #10 Properties will be deeded as rental units – never to be sold (per applicant).

DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

Item #1 Planning Board indicates incomplete submission, suggesting architectural design of the building needs to be revised. Planning Board also indicates a need to meet with the developer to discuss parking, lighting, signs and landscape, etc.

Conservation notes there does not appear to be any plan for restoring the riverfront area and would need to see a restoration plan detailing the soils, plantings, wildlife characteristics, etc. Also questioned, where the site is in an ACEC area, whether a filing will be made with MEPA.

Item #2 Non-Residential Space: conceptual layout dated 6/22/04 depicts gazebo and walking trail.

LOTTERY PROCESS

References to "Salisbury" should read "Dunstable" on pages 5, 8 and 9 of sample lottery application. The Town feels strongly that there is a need for affordable housing and suggests consideration through the lottery process whereby each project should be 25% of affordable housing with another 25% offered at lower than market rate.

In the spirit of cooperation under the LIP process, we hereby submit our comments and look forward to working with you through the process.

Respectfully,
Susan K. Psaledakis, Vice Chairman
Ted Gaudette, Clerk